CHURCH UNION

Extracts from Minutes of Presbyterian General Assembly

(Sessions 1915, 1916, and 1917).

Bibliothèque du Parlement
CLASSIFICATION
CANADA

Issued by
Bureau of Literature and Information
Joint Committee on Church Union
1120 Federal Building
85 Richmond St. West - Toronto

1917

Minutes of General Assembly, 1915

The following recommendations which were adopted by the Presbyterian Committee on Union (See Minutes 1915, page 294), were embodied in the form of a motion by Dr. W. J. Clark and presented to the General Assembly as follows:—(See 1915 Minutes, page 41).

1. "Whereas the action of the General Assembly with regard to Union with the Congregational and Methodist Churches has been as follows:—
2. In 1904 the Assembly unanimously accepted the invitation given in 1902 by the General Conference of the Methodist Church to enter on negotiations for the Organic Union of said Church with the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches, and to this end appointed a committee to confer with similar committees of the other Churches. Subsequent Assemblies approved the results of the labours of the Joint Committee thus constituted until 1910 when the General Assembly approved the completed basis of Union prepared by the Joint Committee and transmitted it to Presbyteries for their judgment under the Barrier Act. The Assembly of 1911, finding that said basis had been approved by a majority of Presbyteries sent down the whole question to Sessions and Congregations.

The action of the Assembly in 1912 was—

"The Assembly rejoices at the large measure of agreement among the negotiating churches which the proceedings of these recent years disclose and which, it believes will prepare the way for a larger measure of union among Christ's people in this land than at present exists.

"The Assembly believes that the fact that a large majority of those voting have declared themselves in favour of the organic union of the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches is a strong indication that the ultimate result of the present movement will be the consummation of such a union and pledges itself to do all in its power to maintain and deepen the unity of spirit which has marked the course of the negotiations, and to continue to promote the fraternal intercourse and conference with the other Churches which have made the present vote possible.

"In view, however, of the extent of the minority which is not yet convinced that organic union is the best method of expressing the unity sincerely desired by all, the Assembly deems it unwise to immediately proceed to consummate the union, but believes that by further conference and discussion practically unanimous action can be secured within a reasonable time.

"That all suggestions made by Presbyteries, Sessions or individuals, or that may be made before the first of November, one thousand nine hundred and twelve (1912) be referred to the Union Committee for their consideration, in the hope of removing objections and with a view to further conference with the committees of the other negotiating Churches."

In 1913 the Assembly resolved that amendments to the Basis of Union and alternative proposals be again invited and referred to its Union Committee in order that after considering them it might again enter into Conference with the Committees of the other Churches with a view of putting before our people a final presentation of the question for their judgment. In 1914 the Assembly invited the Congregational and Methodist Churches to meet with the Presbyterian Union Committee in order to prepare an amended Basis of Union.

3. Whereas also in 1911 the membership of the Methodist and Congregational Churches approved of Union on the proposed basis by very large majorities and these churches since that date have by the action of their Conference Committee and General Council reaffirmed this approval and expressed themselves as ready and waiting to consummate the Union.

4. Whereas, also, the reasons which have consistently been put forward in favour of Church Union still hold, viz.:
   (a) The teaching of this Church regarding the nature of the Church and the Communion of Saints implies that Union is a duty wherever it is not forbidden by conscience.
   (b) The relations of the negotiating churches to one another, the conditions of Christian progress in Canada, and Canada's due share in the evangelization of the world, seem to require the Union of these Churches.
   (c) The multiplication of local "Union Churches" without direct relationship to existing denominations threatens disintegration and injury to the cause of Christ in many parts of our Westland if a united church does not gather them into its fellowship.
   (d) There is a reasonable hope that such a Union will prove the precursor of a wider union.

5. Whereas, further, by the outbreak of war, a new situation has been created, among the elements of which are the following:—
   (a) A changed judgment of values, so that matters which formerly distracted and divided men are now accounted trivial in the presence of the vast issues involved.
   (b) A weakening of class distinctions, which renders possible a degree of united action hitherto impracticable.
   (c) A new spirit of self-sacrifice which is impressively illustrated by our soldiers and by our King, and which the Church, in the name of her crucified Lord is called upon to exhibit by the subordination of every other consideration to the supreme purpose of bringing men to recognize Jesus Christ as the Hope of the World.

(d) An expected increase in the volume of immigration into Canada after the close of the war, demanding the greatest concentration of moral and religious forces,

(e) The world's financial exhaustion, requiring the utmost possible economy of resources, in order that the inevitable and extraordinary demands of the immediate future may be met.

6. Whereas, lastly, the Joint Committee has adopted the amendments to the original Basis of Union embodied in the documents submitted to this Assembly by its Union Committee;

7. Therefore, this Assembly hereby declares its approval of the "Basis of Union," now submitted, as a Basis on which this Church may unite with the Methodist and Congregational Churches, and directs that the said basis be transmitted to Presbyteries for their judgment under the Barrier Act, and that the appendix on law be also transmitted to Presbyteries for their judgment, and that this resolution be sent therewith:

The Assembly also directs:—

1. That the question of Union be submitted to Sessions and also to Communicants and Adherents of the Church in the following form: "Are you in favour of Union with the Methodist and Congregational Churches of Canada on the Basis of Union approved by the General Assembly of 1915? Yes. No." The people are reminded that the decision on this question must be reached on the basis of the votes cast.

2. That the vote be taken in Mission Fields before October 1st, 1915, and in Pastoral Charges before December 1st, 1915, and returns made through Presbytery Clerks to the Clerks of Assembly so that the results may be reported to the Presbytery Clerks before January 1st, 1916.
That the vote be not taken in Presbyteries before January 1st, 1916, and that returns be made by Presbytery Clerks to the Clerks of Assembly not later than the first day of March, 1916.

3. That the Clerks of Assembly through Presbytery Clerks, and, when necessary, through Home Mission Conveners, furnish Sessions for themselves and for Communicants and Adherents the necessary voting papers and printed copies of the Basis of Union, the appendix on law, and the foregoing resolutions together with a short statement representing both sides of the Union question, not to exceed 500 words each.

4. That in the printed copies of the Appendix on Law to be sent to Presbyteries, Sessions, Communicants and Adherents, there be inserted a footnote to Par. 2 (a) (b) the following words:—
At a meeting of the Presbyterian Union Committee held on December 15th, 1914, it was resolved that "it is expected that in the proposed legislation proper provision will be made to guard the rights or privileges of any minority which may be opposed to Union."

5. That Sessions and Presbyteries in reporting their respective votes on the basis of Union report at the same time the number of the vote.

6. That the Union Committee be continued, and the Clerks of Assembly prepare a statement of the result of the vote in Presbyteries and Congregations and furnish the same to the Secretaries of the Union Committee, in order that the said Committee may have opportunity to meet and prepare a deliverance to be submitted to the Assembly of 1916."

The vote on this motion was then taken and stood 368 for and 74 against and it became the deliverance of the Assembly. (See 1915 Minutes, page 50.)

The following amendment to the motion of Dr. Clark was moved by Dr. D. D. MacLeod (See 1915 Minutes, page 48) but on being put to a vote of the Assembly was lost by 84 to 366 (See 1915 Minutes, page 50).

"Whereas in the year 1904, the Assembly accepted the invitation of the Methodist Church to confer on union;
Whereas when, in 1911, a vote was taken to ascertain the mind of the Church on the question of organic union, only about one-third of the membership of the Church voted in favour of it, and only about one-fourth of the membership voted for union on the proposed basis;
Whereas the proposed union involves the giving up of the standards of our Church, and an entire change in our system of government, and would bring to an end our present relationship with the Presbyterian Churches of the World;
Whereas we can better accomplish our work by harmonious co-operation with the negotiating churches;
Whereas a large part of the Presbyterian Church has definitely resolved that it is their duty to remain in and continue the existence of the Presbyterian Church and that further efforts to press organic union is injurious to the peace and prosperity of our Church and to the cause of religion;
And whereas the present crisis in our country makes it especially unfitting to introduce contentious matters into our congregations and the courts of the Church, during this year.
The Assembly therefore resolves as follows:—
That this Assembly reaffirm its belief in the essential unity of all true Christians; its sympathy with all Church organizations that bear Christ's name and likeness; its readiness to co-operate with other evangelical Churches in whatever may advance the interests of His Kingdom, but is of opinion that our Church is not yet ready for organic union on the basis proposed, and resolve to take no further steps in this direction at the present time, and to respectfully inform the other Churches accordingly.
The motion was seconded by Dr. T. F. Fullerton."

Dr. Sedgwick and others, enter their dissent for the reasons set forth in the above preamble to the amendment of Dr. MacLeod. (See 1915 Minutes, page 50). The following signified their adhesion to the Dissent: Dr. Sedgwick, Dr. D. D. McLeod, Dr. R. Campbell, Messieurs, T. C. James, W. Paul, James Ross, P. A. McGregor, A. J. Sinclair, C. N. Mitchell, G. C.

Heine, A. G. Farrell, G. M. Macdonnell, J. R. Battisby, James Mu[illegible] Blackett Robinson, H. McKellar, P. Fisher, M. M. Smith, J. A. Clar[illegible] McLeod, D. A. Murray, A. C. Lockhart, T. F. Fullerton, C. S. McDonald, J. W. S. Lowry, E. Scott, James Rodger, J. A. Lawson, J. K. Henry, S. J. M. Compton, A. M. Nairn.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1916.

COMMITTEE ON RETURNS TO REMIT ON CHURCH UNION. MOTION

The Assembly called for the report of the Committee appointed to consider the returns to Remit on Church Union, which was given in and read by Mr. R. W. Ross, convener, and is as follows: (See 1916 Minutes, pp. 36 and 37).

The Committee on Returns to Remit on Church Union and on Overtures thereanent, met at 10.30 a.m., Friday, June [illegible], 1916, and continued in session until 12.30 noon, and again in the afternoon from 2 to [illegible].30 p.m., and from 8 to to 9.45 p.m.

There were present R. W. Ross, Professor Bieler, W. P. Grant, J. H. Turnbull, Dr. McCrae, J. W. Stevenson, H. Feir, Hon. W. R. Motherwell, Professor Matheson, Arthur M. Fraser; J. H. Turnbull acted as secretary.

Your Committee, in performing the duty assigned to it, have acted on the understanding that they were appointed to enquire into and report as to the results of the voting on Church Union by Presbyeries, with a view to ascertaining the actual judgment of the latter, so far as it was duly reported to the Clerk of Assembly, in a manner not inconsistent with the true spirit and intent of the Barrier Act.

Your Committee having carefully examined all the documents that were submitted to them, now beg to report unanimously the following analysis of the vote:—

Approving Remit	52	Presbyteries
Disapproving Remit	13	"
Ties	3	"
Irrelevant Returns	2	"
Rejected (Cariboo)	1	"
No Returns from	5	"
	76	

The five Presbyteries from which no returns were received were as follows: Lunenburg and Yarmouth, Winnipeg, Kootenay, Trinidad and Honan.

Your Committee further report that nine Presbyteries advised delay and four urged immediate action in the matter.

Supplementary report:

Since preparation of foregoing report, your Committee has received from the Clerk of Assembly, a certified copy of an extract minute sent to Dr. Somerville, Clerk of Assembly, on February 19th, 1916, by the Clerk of the Winnipeg Presbytery, showing that the Presbytery voted on Church Union, under terms of the Barrier Act, on February 15th,

1916, in favour of the proposed Union twenty-nine against two, making the total number of Presbyteries approving fifty-three, not voting four. R. W. Ross, convener; J. H. Turnbull, secretary.

Mr. Ross moved, seconded by Hon. W. R. Motherwell, that the report be received and adopted. After lengthened discussion, taken part in by the mover and seconder, the Senior Clerk, Dr. Du Val and ex-President Forrest, a vote was taken on the motion, which was carried 384 for and 47 against.

Thereupon, Dr. R. Campbell, the Senior Clerk, tabled the following dissent and protest:

"I ask leave to record my dissent from the finding now arrived at by the General Assembly, and to protest against it, because:

1. It disregards the terms of the Barrier Act, which demands that returns from Presbyteries shall be in the form of extract minutes, bearing that Presbyteries met, place and time given, and were constituted, which particulars, some or all of them, are wanting in sixteen of the communications on the subject from Presbytery Clerks, to Clerks of Assembly.
2. It accepts, as legal, returns from Presbyteries which allowed absent members to vote on the Remit.
3. It counts in returns from Presbyteries as voting in favour of the Basis, which attached qualifying conditions to their deliverance, which is contrary to the practice of the Church in carrying out the Barrier Act.
4. It is in violation of the instructions given to Presbyteries by the General Assembly of 1915, which sitpulated that returns on the Remit must be made before March 15th, 1916, to take into account returns from Presbyteries made at a later date.
5. The General Assembly has, in this deliverance, taken upon itself, virtually, to amend some of the returns of Presbyteries and condone illegalities contained therein, which I hold is beyond its power."

"ROBERT CAMPBELL."

The following signified their adherence to the foregoing dissent and protest: Mr. G. M. Macdonnell, K.C., Mr. W. G. Brown, Mr. H. H. Berlis, Mr. A. M. Nairn, Mr. T. W. Taylor, Mr. D. G. Cameron, Mr. J. Kennedy: (See 1916 Minutes, pages 36 and 37).

The following report of the Presbyterian Committee on Union was presented to the Assembly by Dr. W. J. Clark, who moved its reception and adoption. (See 1916 Minutes, page 41). The said report reads as follows: (see Minutes, page 279).

"To the Venerable the General Assembly:

In obedience to the instructions of the General Assembly of 1915, voting papers were prepared and issued in the following form:—

"Are you in favour of Union with the Methodist and Congregational Churches of Canada on the Basis of Union approved by the General Assembly of 1915? Yes. No. The people are reminded that the decision on this question must be reached on the basis of the votes cast."

In addition to the voting papers, all who had a right to vote were furnished with copies of the approved Basis of Union, and a brief statement on behalf of those opposed to Union and also a statement on behalf of those in favor of Union. The vote was taken in Mission Stations up to October

1st, in 1915, in Pastoral Charges up to December 1st of the same year, and in Presbyteries on the remit sent down between January 1st, and March 15th, 1916. The result of these votes taken is here presented:—

Sessions		Communicants		Adherents		Pastoral Charges & Mission Fields	
For	Against	For	Against	For	Against	For	Against
7,066	3,822	106,534	69,913	36,942	20,004	1,331	494

In obedience to the General Assembly's instructions, your Committee was called to meet in the Lecture Hall of St. James' Square Church, in the City of Toronto, on the 12th day of April, 1916. It continued in session for two days, and on a division adopted the following recommendations to the General Assembly:—

"Whereas, according to the official returns laid before this Assembly, a large majority of elders, communicants and adherents have voted in favour of union with the Methodist and Congregational Churches of Canada on the basis adopted by the General Assembly at Kingston in June, 1915;

Whereas of the pastoral charges and mission fields 1,331 voted for union and 494 against, and of the Presbyteries 66 gave a popular majority for union and only 9 a popular majority against union;

Whereas the pastoral charges and mission fields in the 37 Presbyteries of the 4 western Synods—Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, including also the four Presbyteries in New Ontario, where the practical need of union is most felt and where union would effect the greatest changes, gave the overwhelming decision of 698 for union, as opposed to 89 against union.

Whereas, the Presbyteries when consulted under the Barrier Act declared by a majority of 49 to 12, with two ties, that they were in favour of union with the Methodist and Congregational Churches of Canada on the Basis approved by the Assembly of 1915;

Whereas, the Methodist and Congregational Churches of Canada, have by very large majorities indicated their readiness to enter such a union and thus take the first step towards the reunion of Protestant Christendom in Canada.

Whereas, several Presbyteries have overtured the Assembly asking that some step forward be taken, even though it be not thought wise to consummate organic union at once;

Whereas certain Presbyteries have overtured the Assembly specially requesting that organic union be consummated at the earliest moment possible;

Whereas the home mission work and the rural situation throughout all the provinces demand such readjustment as only organic union can bring;

Whereas a deliberate return to denominational competition would be contrary to the spirit of Christ and greatly weaken the Church's power to unite the different elements of our citizenship in one strong, national life;

And whereas the years immediately following the war will be too critical in the religious and national life of Canada to permit these three churches to continue groping about in uncertain relationship to each other with no definite goal;

Therefore the Committee on Union with the Methodist and Congregational Churches of Canada recommend to the Venerable, the General Assembly,

1. That at the meeting in Winnipeg in June, 1916, a resolution be passed definitely committing the Church to union with the Methodist and Congregational Churches of Canada on the basis approved by the General Assembly of 1915 and by a large majority of the Presbyteries under the Barrier Act, provided that the other churches mentioned agree to the same.

2. That this decision be formally announced to the Methodist and Congregational Churches of Canada.

3. That the date for the consummation of union be not fixed at present.

4. That within the period of one year after the close of the war any congregation which gave a majority vote against union be permitted to take a vote of the communicants as to whether they will enter the United Church or not, the majority of those voting to decide.

5. That thereafter the Assembly proceed, through its Union Committee in co-operation with committees of the Methodist and Congregational Churches of Canada, to seek the necessary legislation in Parlament to enable the Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian Churches of Canada to unite; and that, should there be any congregations which have decided by a majority vote of the communicants not to enter the United Church, equitable provision be made in this legislation for such congregations.

6. That the union be consummated as soon thereafter as the regular steps can be taken.

7. That in the meantime Presbyteries be instructed to move along the lines authorized by the General Assembly in Edmonton in 1912 either by local unions or by withdrawal of one church or the other where serious overlapping is taking place to the detriment of religion.

8. That to the better furtherance of this end in each of the 37 Presbyteries of western Canada and in the 4 Presbyteries of New Ontario a committee of 3 (1 of whom shall be the Superintendent of the bounds) be appointed to meet a like number of the Methodist Church of Canada and one from the Congregational Church of Canada where missions of that Church are found, to advance local union or co-operation of congregations or mission stations, such Joint Committee to be authorized,

(a) To see that Union Churches are regularly visited.

(b) To select from the literature of the churches what may be suitable for their use and to urge its purchase.

(c) To send delegates to promote liberality in these Union Churches toward missionary, charitable and patriotic objects.

(d) To urge these Union Churches to take up collections for the various schemes of the Churches to be divided pro rata between the Churches represented.

(9) That the General Assembly continue to any minister in good standing in this Church who may accept the pastorate of a Union or Co-operative Church the rights that he now enjoys in this Church, and that the Conference of the Methodist Church and the Congregational Union be asked to do the same. (See Minutes 1916, pages 279 and 280).

Dr. Clark's motion to receive and adopt this report was carried by the Assembly. (1916 Minutes, pages 50, 51 and 54).

The following motion on the question of union was then passed by the General Assembly by a vote of 406 to 90 and was therefore declared to be the finding of the Assembly. (See 1916 Minutes, pages 54, 57 and 58).

1. "That the report of the Committee on union be received.

2. That in accordance with its recommendations this General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada do now resolve to unite with the Methodist Church of Canada and the Congregational Churches of Canada to constitute "The United Church of Canada," on the basis of Union, approved by the General Assembly of 1915, and by the majority of Presbyteries since consulted under the Barrier Act.

3. That this decision be formally announced to the Methodist Church of Canada and the Congregational Churches of Canada.

4. That a Committee be appointed to carry out the policy of the Assembly, and to act in co-operation, with Committees of the Methodist and Congregational Churches of Canada in obtaining the necessary legal advice and in taking such steps as may be deemed proper to prepare for making application to the Dominion and Provincial Legislatures for such legislation as may be necessary to secure the conveyance of property to the United Church. That this committee report to the first Assembly following the end of the first year after the close of the war, and that with the consent and authority of that Assembly, application be made for the legislation proposed at the following session of the Dominion Parliament and the Provincial Legislatures.

5. That provision be made in this legislation to conserve the property rights of all congregations that may determine by a majority vote of the communicants not to enter the United Church.

6. That the union be consummated as soon after the securing of legislation as the regular steps can be taken.

7. That in the meantime Presbyteries be instructed to move along the lines authorized by the General Assembly in Edmonton, in 1912, either by local unions or by withdrawal of one Church or the other where serious overlapping is taking place to the detriment of religion.

8. That to the better furtherance of this end, in each of the thirty-seven Presbyteries of Western Canada, including the four Presbyteries of New Ontario, a committee of three (one of whom shall be the superintendent of the bounds) be appointed to meet a like number of the Methodist Church of Canada and one from the Congregational Church of Canada, where missions of that Church are found, and one from the Union Churches where there are such within the bounds to advance local union or co-operation of congregations or mission stations, such Joint Committee to be authorized:
   (a) To see that Union Churches are regularly visited.
   (b) To select from the literature of the Churches what may be suitable for their use and to urge its purchase.
   (c) To send delegates to promote liberality in those Union Churches toward missionary, charitable and patriotic objects.

(d) To urge these Churches to take up collections for the various schemes of the Churches, to be divided proportionately between the Churches represented.

9. That the General Assembly continue to any minister in good standing in this Church who may accept the pastorate of a Union or Co-operative Church the rights that he now enjoys in this Church, and that the Conference of the Methodist Church and the Congregational Union be asked to do the same.

The following dissent and protest was then presented (see 1916 Minutes, page 58).

"We, the undersigned, in our own name, and in the name of all that may choose to adhere to us, hereby record our dissent from the deliverance now come to; and we protest that this General Assembly, having voted by a majority to adopt in the Basis of Union with the Congregational and Methodist Churches of Canada, a constitution entirely different from that of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, has thereby ceased to be a General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada; that those who voted against the motion to adopt this new constitution alone have a right to seats in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada; that all those who have gone on record as voting for the adoption of this new constitution, by that act have ceased to be of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and have no legal right to take part in transacting the business of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada; and we do further protest that if we continue to act with them in dealing with the business of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, we are not to be held as recognizing their right to seats in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada." (Signed by 32 members).

Robert Campbell, E. Scott, John Fingal Smith, W. W. Fraser, J. D. Cunningham, J. O. Watts, D. McIntosh, D. G. Cameron, G. R. Vanderbeck, John Fernie, D. Perrie, William Simons, Thomas A. Mitchell, W. G. Robertson, J. Kennedy, N. Campbell, Robert McMillan, W. G. Brown, H. Pillar, W. W. Stewart, W. T. Cranston, G. N. Macdonnell, Geo. P. Pelfer, T. Wardlaw Taylor, S. D. Jamieson, H. A. Berlis, A. R. Lincoln, J. W. N. Garling, Walter Paul, C S. McDonald, Malcolm A. Campbell.

COMMITTEE ON DISSENTS AND PROTESTS.

(See 1916 Minutes, page 71).

A Committee to answer the dissents and protests made at previous sederunts in connection with the findings of the Assembly was named by the Moderator, to consist of Principal Gandier, Convener; President Falconer, Dr. R. D. Fraser, Dr. D. M. Ramsay and Mr. John A. Paterson.

The Committee as thus named, was accepted by the Assembly and it was ordered that the answers should be incorporated in the Minutes of this Assembly.

These, as subsequently handed in to the Clerks of Assembly, are as follows:—

"The Committee appointed by the General Assembly furnished the following answers to the reasons given by Rev. Robert Campbell, D.D., and others for dissent from the finding of the Committee on the Returns to the Remit on Church Union, and for dissent and protest from and against the majority vote of the Assembly on the resolution reported from the Church Union Committee, and adopted by the Assembly.

First: Re Dissent from Assembly's finding on Returns to Remit.

Reason 1. The terms of the Barrier Act are that "an extract minute of the Presbytery's judgment shall be sent to the Clerk of the General Assembly before the meeting of that Court." While some of the returns are not in the exact form suggested by the Book of Rules and Forms of procedure for Extract Minutes of Presbytery, there is no doubt whatever that each of the sixteen returns challenged by Dr. Campbell is in reality an extract Minute of Presbytery giving to the Clerk of Assembly an accurate return of the vote of the Presbytery on the Remit over the signature of the Presbytery Clerk. The suggested Rules and Forms of Procedure are not Church Law ,but as the book itself declares, were approved and adopted by the General Assembly "as a useful guide for the members, the office-bearers and the Courts of the Church in the transaction of ecclesiastical business."

Reason 2. The returns complained of in the second reason for dissent were accepted by the Committee and Assembly as legal only where the Presbytery met and was constituted and took the vote in regular form, and, thereafter, in order to ascertain more fully the mind of the entire Presbytery on this question, allowed absent members to record their votes by mail to the Clerk of Presbytery. As a matter of fact, in no case did the additional votes of absent members change the finding of the Presbytery. The Barrier Act does not prescribe how the vote is to be taken. Its evident purpose is to prevent the Assembly making changes in the doctrine, discipline, government or worship of the Church which do not carry with them the consent of a majority of the Presbyteries. There is no manner of doubt as to what the will of these Presbyteries is, and not to accept these returns would be to make void the will of the Presbyteries on the merest technicality; but, even were these returns not counted, there would still be a majority of Presbyteries voting "Yea."

Reason 3: All the Presbyteries counted as voting in favour of the Basis sent in their answers to the Remit without qualifyin[illegible]ditions. By separate resolutions or overtures, nine Presbyteries [illegible]ed delay and four urged immediate action in the matter.

Reason 4. The Assembly of 1915 instructed that Presbytery Clerks make returns to the Clerks of Assembly not later than March 15th, 1916, in order that the Clerks of the Assembly might prepare a statement of the vote for a meeting of the Union Committee to be held in time to prepare a deliverance to be submitted to the Assembly. This was not a law of the Church, but a matter of practical arrangement. It cannot be held, therefore, that the receiving of returns after the time so fixed invalidates them. The Barrier Act simply says that "an extract minute of the Presbytery's judgment shall be sent to the Clerk

of the General Assembly before the next meeting of that Court." It prescribes no other time limit. In the case of the Presbytery of Winnipeg, returns were not received until after the Assembly had convened, but the Clerk of that Presbytery testified in the Court that the vote had been taken on February 15th, and an extract minute sent to Dr. Somerville, Clerk of Assembly, on February 19th.

Even in this case the conditions of the Barrier Act had been complied with.

Reason 5. The previous answers show that this statement also does not accord with the facts. The Assembly did not take upon itself "virtually to amend some of the returns of the Presbyteries and condone illegalities contained therein." What the Assembly did was to refuse to allow a few unimportant technicalities to thwart the evident will of the Presbyteries as expressed in their votes.

Second: Re Dissent and Protest, re deliverance as per resolution from Union Committee. (See Minutes, p. 73).

"In answer to the dissent of the Rev. Robert Campbell, D.D., and others, from the deliverance of the General Assembly on the question of Church Union, and their protest against it, the Assembly denies that it has adopted in the Basis of Union, "a constitution entirely different from that of the Presbyterian Church in Canada."

While the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in Canada is modified in the Basis of Union, it remains essentially the same. Everything that is vital to the Presbyterian system is retained. Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods and General Assemblies remain in the United Church, constituted in a similar way, and with similar functions of government, the only difference being that the names "Conference" and "General Council" are substituted for "Synod" and "General Assembly."

The omission of the name "Presbyterian" from the official title of the United Church of Canada does not necessarily imply the giving up of any of the great principles of the Presbyterian system. As a matter of fact, no one of the three parent Churches of Scotland—the Church of Scotland, the United Free Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland—has the word "Presbyterian" in its official title.

But while the Assembly denies that the Basis of Union involves any vital change in the Constitution of the Church, the Assembly asserts the freedom of the Church, as the living body of Christ indwelt by His Spirit, to modify its doctrine, discipline, government and worship as fuller light may be received, and in order to the more effective fulfilment of its mission in the world. The Barrier Act itself takes for granted that the Church has power to modify its doctrine, discipline, government and worship, but provides that no Assembly shall make such change until a majority of the Presbyteries have given their consent.

To contend that only those who voted against the motion to adopt this new constitution have a right to seats in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and that all those who have gone on record as voting for the adoption of this new constitution have ceased to be of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and have no legal right to take part in transacting the business of the General Assembly of the Pres-

byterian Church in Canada, on the face of it is absurd. If the Presbyterian Church in Canada is to be governed by its constituted Courts, it is not a group of individuals, but the Presbyterian Church in Canada which has adopted the Basis of Union and decided to unite with the Methodist and the Congregational Churches of Canada to constitute the United Church of Canada; for not only a majority of the communicants, but a large majority of Presbyteries, and a majority of 406 to 90 in the General Assembly, the Supreme Court of the Church, have pronounced in favour of this Union on the Basis adopted. If a small group of members of the Assembly who do not think with the majority is to defy the decision of the Presbyteries, and is to block Union, notwithstanding a vote of 406 to 90 in the General Assembly, what is to become of the government of the Church by Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies which our Ministers and elders have solemnly avowed to maintain and defend?" (See 1916 Minutes, page 73).

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1917.

The report of the Presbyterian Committee on Union reads as follows: (See Minutes, page 235).

"On July 26th, 1916, the Committee met in Toronto and gave prolonged consideration to the findings which had been reached by the General Assembly. According to the resolutions of the Assembly the duties of this Committee are:

(a) To carry out the policy of the Assembly.

(b) To act in co-operation with Committees of the Methodist and Congregational Churches in Canada in obtaining the necessary legal advice and in taking such steps as may be deemed proper to prepare for making application to the Dominion and Provincial Legislatures for such legislation as may be necessary to secure the conveyance of property to the United Church.

(c) After conference with the corresponding committees of the other Churches, to authorize the Boards of Education, Foreign Missions, Home Missions and Social Service, Sunday Schools and Young People's Societies, and Publications to co 'er with the corresponding Boards in the Methodist and Co regational Churches to plan for the largest measure that may be ossible of Federation or Co-operation in the interest of economy and efficiency.

In pursuance of these instructions your Committee proceeded to carry out the policy of the Assembly by informing the Sessions of the Church as to the action of the Assembly and its significance. With this object "A Message to Sessions" was prepared and sent out to Sessions and also made available for congregational use, where asked for.

Your Committee has nothing to report to this Assembly on the matter included in the second part of its instructions.

In regard to the remaining portion of its instructions your Committee begs to report that it held conference with the representatives of the Boards of the Church, mentioned in the resolution, and thereafter authorized these Boards to enter into co-operation with similar Boards of the other Churches.

Your Committee would draw especial attention to the action taken in regard to Co-operation, and Local Union Churches in accordance with

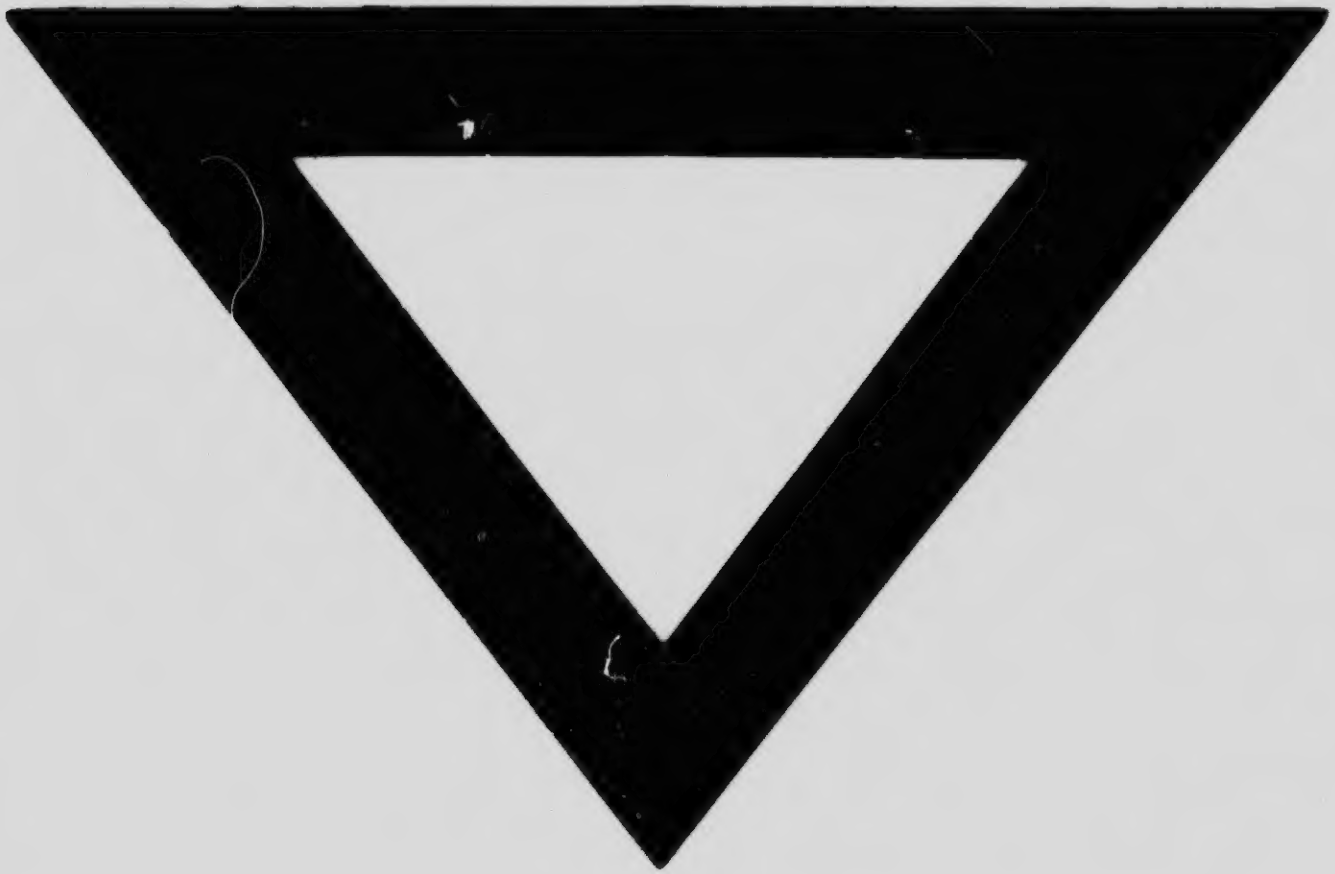
clauses No. 7, 8 and 9 of the main resolution of the Assembly on Church Union and of the subsequent instruction given to the Church Union Committee by the resolution re co-operation adopted by the Assembly on June 15th (Minutes of Assembly, page 75). This action is set forth in the two pamphlets entitled respectively, "Agreement for Co-operation" and "Suggested Plan for Local Union Churches," which have been distributed to the Synods and Presbyteries of the Church, and which are printed as an addendum to this report.
(See 1917 Minutes, page 235).

It was moved that this report be received and adopted. (See 1917 Minutes, page 38). A motion to adopt the above report of the Committee on Church Union, with its scheme of co-operation, was adopted by unanimous vote of the Assembly. (See 1917 Minutes, page 54).

The following motion was moved by Sir Robert Falconer and seconded by Dr. W. L. Clay:— (see Minutes, page 53).

1. "That the Assembly express its sincere sympathy with the desire conveyed in many of the overtures to avoid disunion among the membership of our own Church, and, to this end, earnestly urge upon our people that debate and organized propagandism on either side be discontinued in the meantime, and that a spirit of prayer be cultivated.

2. That, inasmuch as the resolution of the last Assembly sets forth that further action will not be taken until the second Assembly after the close of the war, to secure peace in the meantime, the Assembly urges that controversy on the matter of organic Union be dropped by all parties; that no attempt be made at the present time to set forth in detail the action appropriate to a future period, but that the Church patiently await the new light which it may receive by Divine guidance through the growing experience of the people and the lessons of the war.

3. That the work of the Union Committee for this period be confined to the superintendence of such practical forms of co-operation as have been already authorized, and that the personnel of this Committee be modified in order to secure the fullest approval for such co-operative requirements."

By a standing vote, the Assembly unanimously agreed to the above motion (see Minutes, page 54).